SOME NATIONAL REACTIONS TO THE ACQUISITION
OF TEXAS, 1836-1846

A THESIS

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By

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CHAPTER I

THE ANNEXATION OF TEXAS BY THE UNITED STATES

Texas, one of the Eastern Interior Provinces of Mexico, continued to develop rapidly from 1820 to 1830, a result much induced by the invitation which Mexico extended to immigrants. In 1830, so strong a colony existed in Texas that Mexico became alarmed, and forbade the further importation of settlers from the United States. This aroused the Texans, since they were cut off from their friends and relatives. This was not the entertainment, says Yoakum, the Texas historian, to which they had been invited.[1]

Texas Gains Her Independence

Thus it became the great object of Texans to obtain autonomy in government. Stephen F. Austin was despatched to Mexico in 1833, to secure, if possible, the separation of Texas from Coahuila, to which it had been attached since 1827. The Mexican government regarded this desire as rebellious, but offered no remedy to the grievances of the people.

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1 Lyon G. Tyler, The Letters and Times of the Tylers, II, 253.

In 1835 Santa Anna, at the point of the bayonet, reduced the sovereign States to departments, and dissolved the Legislature of Coahuila and Texas. The Texans flew to arms, Santa Anna invaded Texas, and the war of independence had begun. It was terminated on the field of San Jacinto on April 21, 1836. The United States recognized the independence of Texas the following year.

Texas asked to be annexed to the American Union, but President Van Buren refused on the grounds that it would involve the United States in a war with Mexico. In September, 1837, John Quincy Adams spoke against the annexation of Texas on constitutional grounds. In October, 1838, the offer of annexation was withdrawn by the Texas government.

Between October, 1838, and the arrival in Washington of James Reilley, the Texan Representative, in the spring of 1842, annexation was not an active issue. Adams was chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee during the twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh Congresses, and he was ever watchful of Texan and Mexican affairs. He hated Andrew Jackson, and held Tyler in such contempt that he considered him unworthy of notice. Adams considered Waddy Thompson, newly appointed minister to Mexico, as an annexationist, although Lyon G. Tyler asserts that Thompson was selected by President Harrison, and was not Tyler's choice.[2]

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2 _Ibid._, 16.

When Mr. Tyler became President, Texas had for five years preserved her autonomy in defiance of Mexico. During that time not once did Mexico invade Texas soil. The massacres and cruelties of the Alamo and Goliad, and the policy of plundering and thieving by small bands of rancheros from the Rio Grande, bespoke Mexico. The wonder is, says Tyler, not that the United States should have annexed Texas, but that the whole world should not have interfered with arms in Mexico's tyrannical course. He further declares as follows:

> Von Holst and other writers of that ilk represent the settlement of Texas as a well understood conspiracy to snatch that territory from Mexico. There is not a word of truth in it. Had they been treated properly, the Texans would never have thought of independence. But with what grace does Von Holst except Adams from that conspiracy? Jackson certainly wanted for his own glory to annex Texas, but to argue a purpose to augment the slave-power is as sensible as supposing that he hanged Ambrister and Arbuthnot for that purpose; or that his proclamation in 1833 against the nullifiers was to induce a Southern confederacy. It seems altogether proper that the ablest writer of the old Federal school should be a native of the despotism of Germany. Von Holst denounces the violence of Southern men, when his own language at times would put to blush the most approved fireater, who is equally a denizen of all countries. A fair writer would say, on the whole, that Southern literature bears about the same comparison in this respect with Northern (vide Von Holst, Adams' Memoirs, etc., etc.) that the cool-headed Southern Presidents, Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, and Tyler do, with the hot-headed Adamses.[3]

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3 <u>Ibid</u>., 252-54.

Tyler Proposes Annexation by Treaty

Scarcely had John Tyler seated himself in the White House, when Henry A. Wise, one of his most intimate political friends, advised him to obtain Texas as soon as possible. The new President concurred in the advice, and a few months later wrote the following to Daniel Webster, the Secretary of State:

> I gave you a hint as to the possibility of acquiring Texas by treaty --- I verily believe it could be done --- Could the north be reconciled to it would anything throw so bright a lustre around us? It seems to me that the great interests of the north would be incalculably advanced by such an acquisition --- How deeply interested is the shipping interest? Slavery --- I know that is the objection --- and it would be well founded if it did not already exist among us --- but my belief is that a rigid enforcement of the laws against the slave trade, would make in time as many free states, south, as the acquisition of Texas would add to slave states --- and then the future (distant it might be) would present wonderful results.[4]

Tyler's real motive in desiring to make the acquisition was apparently an ambition to do something brilliant for the country and gain fame in its history. Such an achievement, he doubtless hoped, would give him that personal following in the nation which he desired to acquire. Because he was unable to please either Democrats or Whigs as a party man, he thought he could please them all as Americans by identifying himself with something of

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4 J. H. Smith, The Annexation of Texas, 103.

nonpartisan value.

However, one finds that Tyler's cabinet was not in harmony on annexation. Secretary of State Webster, for example, was opposed to slavery and Southern domination. He considered the port of San Francisco worth twenty times the whole of Texas. Thus, Tyler could only wait and feel about for elements of support.

Early in the winter of 1842-43, several members of Congress let the President know that they favored the annexation of Texas. Nicholas Biddle, head of the United States Bank, also made it known that he favored the annexation even though he was a Northern man. He further stimulated Tyler by pointing out as a matter of great importance that the acquisition would give the United States a substantial monopoly of cotton, which meant not only a guaranty of Southern prosperity, but a rope around the neck of the foreign nation most to be feared, Great Britian.[5]

In May, 1843, Webster resigned as Secretary of State, and Judge A. P. Upshur of Virginia succeeded to that post. Only a month prior to this, Van Zandt described Upshur as the best possible man to succeed Webster in so far as the interests of Texas were concerned. Upshur, according to Van Zandt, had the nerve to take responsibility and act with decision. Webster himself admitted later that no better

5 Ibid., 109.

choice was possible.

In the spring of 1843, something very suggestive occurred. An abolition movement suddenly made its appearance in Texas. Many of the Southern papers were alarmed by it, and the news spread rapidly North. By many Americans, England was believed to be behind the movement to free the slaves. The Baltimore American, for example, declared that should the scheme be carried out, Texas would naturally drift into British control. Thus, England could use her effectively against us in time of war.

It is evident that the Texas issue stirred the United States more and more from the close of 1841 to the early months of 1844. Tyler, Gilmer, Adams, and his associates, the legislatures of States, the administration journals, Webster, and Walker, all concurred in giving notice that a move in the cause of annexation was soon to be made. On the third of November, 1843, Upshur received five despatches from W. S. Murphy, the American representative in Texas. One informed him that no American vessels were then engaged in the Gulf trade. This meant an increase of British prestige and influence in that quarter. Another despatch stated that Elliot, the British minister, had urged the Beales claim with much earnestness. A third contained a newspaper that, in Murphy's opinion, was turning the affections of the people of Texas from the United States to England. A fourth despatch had a good deal to say about the abolition designs of the British government. More important, however, was a fifth despatch, for it covered a transcript of the correspondence that had passed between Elliot and Jones, the Texas Secretary of State, with reference to the truce with Mexico. It is to be remembered that Texas and Mexico signed an armistice on February 15, 1844. A revival of the movement to annex Texas to the United States brought an end to this armistice a few months later.[6]

After President Houston had been assured that the United States really meant business, he sent to the Congress of Texas on January 20, 1844, his secret annexation message. The real object of the message was an appropriation to cover the expenses of an additional agent to the United States should certain contingencies happen.[7] Five thousand dollars was appropriated for this purpose, and J. Pinckney Henderson was appointed to join Van Zandt in Washington to try to draw up an annexation treaty. Their instructions were to try to obtain from the United States before beginning negotiations as full a guarantee as possible on the question of protection against Mexico. On April 12, 1844, the treaty of annexation was signed in Washington.[8]

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6 R. N. Richardson, _Texas The Lone Star State_, 164.

7 Henderson Yoakum, _History of Texas_, II, 427.

8 L. J. Wortham, _A History of Texas_, IV, 147.

The Annexation Question is Thrown Into National Politics

As the Presidential campaign of 1844 drew near, it was seen that Henry Clay would be the standard-bearer for the Whig Party. The situation was very different with the Democrats. Almost immediately after Harrison's victory in 1840, Van Buren began campaigning for the nomination in 1844. During the three years that followed, conventions in twenty-four of the twenty-six States voted for him. More than three-fourths of the twenty-six States instructed the delegations to vote for Van Buren in the coming national convention of the party. However, this apparent unanimity was far from being real.

Tyler, finding that even the Massachusetts Whigs were against him, despite Webster's great influence, turned towards the Democrats for support. But the Northern wing of that party feared that his return to it would injure Van Buren's prospects, and gave the President a cool shoulder. Representative Cave Johnson declared that the whole patronage of the government was being thrown in favor of annexation and against Van Buren. Tyler opposed Van Buren's nomination because he feared that Van Buren would not support the annexation issue.

Calhoun also had reasons for being against Van Buren. He, as Tyler, believed in State-rights and slavery, and he hated the tariff with real bitterness. There was also a long-standing feud between him and Van Buren.

Besides Tyler and Calhoun, Cass, R. M. Johnson, and Buchanan were Presidential aspirants. Each labored in his own interests, and each worked against Van Buren. As far back as 1843, Calhoun men were to be found in the South and Southwest who vowed that they would vote for the Whig candidate rather than to support Van Buren.

Henry Clay had been studying the annexation question very seriously. He had traveled through the South and found out, at New Orleans, that the United States was trying to annex Texas. Clay issued a statement to the papers in which he denounced Tyler for trying to do this. Mr. Clay declared that by the treaty of 1803, the United States obtained a title covering all the territory to the Rio Grande. He declared further that in 1819 the United States gave up the region beyond the Sabine. He believed that it was dishonorable to lay claim to what we had surrendered. Then, too, the statesman believed that the act would plunge this country into war with Mexico. Clay was denounced by charges that he was sacrificing the interests of the South to gain votes in the opposite quarter, and he was also accused of pro-British sentiment.

The Whig Party met for its national convention at Baltimore on May 1, 1844. Henry Clay was unanimously nominated for the Presidency. Annexation was not mentioned in the platform, but the candidate's declaration against it was equivalent to a party pronouncement.[9]

On May 27, a Tyler convention met in the same city. Tyler accepted its invitation and made his letter of acceptance available to the people. In it he summarized the events of the annexation treaty and pledged himself to go through with the matter. Later, Tyler explained that as he could not run the risk of Van Buren's nomination and the consequent failure of his great project, he called a convention of his own so as to leave to the Democrats merely an option between a Texas man and defeat.

On the same day as Tyler's convention the Democratic Party assembled at Baltimore, but here the sailing was not as smooth as in either the Tyler convention or the Whig convention. Van Buren had a majority on the first ballot, but that was not enough since the rules were changed requiring a two-thirds vote. As the balloting went on, it was seen that Van Buren was out of the race. Thus, they turned to James K. Polk, a dark horse.

The delegates went wild over the nominee. Francis Wharton explained the matter clearly to Calhoun when he said that the people were excited, not because Polk was nominated, but because the party was not broken up. The convention adopted a plank strongly favorable to annexation. The following is a part of the platform:

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9 Ibid., 162.

> Resolved, that our title to the whole of the territory of Oregon is clear and unquestionable; that no portion of the same ought to be ceded to England or any other power; and that the re-occupation of Oregon and the re-annexation of Texas at the earliest practicable period are great American measures, which this convention recommends to the cordial support of the Democracy of the Union.10

Fate of the Treaty

On April 22, 1844, the annexation treaty was read twice, ordered printed in confidence for the use of the Senators, and referred to the committee on foreign relations. For nearly three weeks it was discussed in the committee room, and on May 10 it was reported. Three days later, Senator Thomas H. Benton of Missouri, offered a few resolutions to be added to the treaty: that the annexation of Texas would be an assumption of the war between that country and Mexico; that the treaty-making power has no right to create a war either by declaration or adoption; and that the territory abandoned in 1819 ought to be reunited with the American Union as soon as it can be done with the consent of the majority of the people of the United States and of Texas, and when Mexico shall either consent to the same or acknowledge the independence of Texas, or cease to prosecute the war against her on a scale commensurate with the conquest of the country.

The effect of Clay's and Van Buren's letters on the

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10 J. H. Smith, _op_. _cit_., 255.

annexation of Texas was of course immense. The Spectator announced that Clay's letters would kill the measure. Then, a great number of adverse resolutions, petitions, and memorials poured into the House and Senate, and their strength could not fail to have some effect upon the members of Congress. For example, the Connecticut legislature resolved that annexation would violate our treaty with Mexico and virtually declare war upon her.

On the other hand, however, there were several factors that favored the annexation treaty. A desire to obtain the Texas trade had recently shown itself in Congress, and in February, 1844, citizens of New York had begged the Senators to ratify the treaty of navigation and commerce which had been arranged with Texas. A petition from Maine which was signed by both parties argued that the annexation of Texas was essential. It further declared that the extension of Texas as an independent nation would be troublesome if not dangerous; that in time she might become unfriendly toward the United States; that in peace our interests would suffer from her unequal competition and the diversion of her trade to other channels; and that annexation, improving our boundaries, adding to our security and strength in case of war, increasing our commerce and shipping business in times of peace, enlarging the market for our manufactures, promoting our internal trade, and opening a general field for the enterprise of our citizens, would confer benefits like those derived from the acquisition of Louisiana. More emphatic were the resolutions of the Mississippi legislature, which urged the immediate annexation of Texas, and maintained that any attempt of a foreign power to obtain it should be considered by the United States a sufficient cause for war. Benton asserted that during the debates on the annexation treaty the State Department, the White House, the lobbies of the Senate, and all other public places were crowded with speculators in Texas land and in claims against Mexico. All were working for ratification.

No one really knew how the Senators would vote. Only one day before final action was taken, Henderson, who was appointed to join Van Zandt in Washington to draw up an annexation treaty, informed Jones, the Texas Secretary of State, that the Senators did not know what to do. Finally, on the eighth of June, a decision was reached. By a vote of thirty-five to sixteen the United States Congress for the second time rejected the annexation of Texas.[11]

Annexation is Offered Texas by Resolution

The United States government assured Henderson upon his arrival in Washington that, in case of necessity, Texas would be annexed by a legislative act. It should be remem-

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11 H. S. Thrall, _A History of Texas_, 137.

bered that on the day the annexation treaty was introduced Van Zandt wrote that the President had promised, should it not be ratified, to urge immediately upon Congress the passage of an equivalent law. That equivalent law was obviously based upon that provision of the constitution which empowers the two Houses jointly to admit new States. President Houston was assured by letters from the United States that annexation at some period was inevitable, and Texas was advised to keep herself in a receptive mood so that whenever the time arrived there would be no new obstacles in the way.[12]

Congress was now almost at an end, and there was no course open for President Tyler except to wait until December, when Congress would reassemble. At that time the President was ready to act on the matter. His annual Message referred to the Texas question at length, and again he stressed the advantages of securing Texas. He also pointed out that the election results proved that the public wanted Texas annexed immediately.[13]

On December 18, 1844, President Tyler sent another Message to Congress in which he covered the relations of the United States with Mexico. He declared that Mexico had violated her agreements with us, and now besides insulting

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12 J. H. Brown, History of Texas, II, 304.

13 R. N. Richardson, op. cit., 165.

us endeavors to set one part of our people against the other by fomenting our differences of opinion regarding slavery and the incorporation of Texas into the Union. He then went on to argue that annexation was not a sectional issue at all, and urged that as a reply to the outrages and misrepresentations of our "dear" neighbor the best course would be to act promptly on the annexation issue.

At this time public opinion was setting more and more strongly in favor of the President's wishes. The New York Courier and Enquirer showed the attitude of the country by going over to the side of the administration. This does not mean, however, that all opposition ceased. The Boston Atlas, for example, declared that Massachusetts would not submit to the annexation of Texas. Even the Democrats felt by no means sure of carrying the measure through at once. Calhoun thought the prospect "pretty fair." Almonte, the Mexican minister to Texas who was watching affairs closely in the interest of Mexico, believed that nothing would be done until after the inauguration of Polk.

Soon after the December session began, however, several propositions were brought forward relating to the annexation of Texas. The first of these came from Representative Weller, a Democrat from Ohio. His plan stipulated that Texas should become a Territory, that her public lands should be used to pay her debt, and that a commission should determine the boundary. This plan met with considerable favor since it did not mention slavery. Four days later Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois offered a joint resolution in the Senate similar to the one offered by Weller. Tibbatts, a Kentucky Democrat, followed with a resolution based upon the treaty of 1803 which contemplated the admission of Texas as a State no larger than the largest member of the Union, her debt to be paid with the proceeds of the sales of her public lands, and her territory to be free north of the Missouri Compromise line. Milton Brown, a Tennessee Whig, proposed a simple proposition. It provided that the territory rightfully belonging to the republic of Texas might become a State, referred the adjustment of her boundary to the government of the Union, assumed neither her debts nor her public lands, left the question of slavery south of the Missouri Compromise line optional with the people, and prohibited involuntary servitude in the insignificant northern portion. Numerous other plans were also proposed.

A flood of argument ensued, and it came to be seen more and more clearly as the days passed that a substantial majority desired the annexation of Texas. Brown's resolution was adopted after a provision had been added that excluded slavery north of the Missouri Compromise line.

While this discussion and voting was taking place in the House, the Senate was neither unmindful nor inactive. Similar resolutions were being introduced in that body.

According to the London Times, the Senate was the only American institution commanding respect abroad, and here at least the cause of right was expected to triumph. Petitions and resolutions poured into both Houses both for and against annexation.

The passage of Brown's resolution in the lower House was made known officially to the Senate on January 27, and its concurrence was invited. On February 27, the Senate passed a resolution that was a little different from Brown's resolution. The House tried to add amendments to the Senate version, but the Speaker ruled out all dilatory points of order and refused to entertain appeals. It was endorsed by the House, this time more emphatically than before. On March 1, 1845, President Tyler signed the resolution, thus completing the process of its enactment.[14]

Texas is Annexed

Major Donelson, the United States chargé in Texas, visited Houston and found him to be opposed to the American terms. Especially did he object to the cession of Texas public property and the uncertainty of the southwestern boundary. Donelson tried to convince Houston that the annexation of Texas would be good for his country, but he would not listen. Houston went even further by complaining

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14 L. J. Wortham, op. cit., 189.

that Brown's resolution meant dictating the terms and driving Texas into submission. He declared that Texas should have some say about the matter, and that being compelled to surrender her property without compensation, she really has to pay a price for American statehood. Donelson received the impression that were it left to Houston, the measure would fail as far as Texas was concerned.

Anson Jones was inaugurated as President of Texas on December 9, 1844. He was born at Great Barrington, Maine, in 1798 and had been a country doctor in Massachusetts.[15] Donelson interviewed Jones also and found that something strange was going on, but he could not find out what that was. Jones merely intimated that he expected to receive something from Mexico within the next sixty days. However, public opinion soon forced President Jones to listen to the American proposals. For some time now the people had been in a perfect commotion and some even proposed to lynch Jones, should he offer the least opposition to the American proposals.

Under these circumstances Donelson felt ready to submit the matter to the Texas inhabitants. All the Texan authorities needed to do, explained Donelson, was to express their acceptance of the proposition and summon a convention to modify the constitution and the government.

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15 Anson Jones, _Memoranda and Official Correspondence Relating to the Republic of Texas_, 1.

He explained that this great question was in the hands of Texas. Major Donelson asserted further that it depends upon herself whether she will be restored to the family of States or run the hazards of a separate career, at a period in the affairs of the world when the friends of a different system of government are urged by the most powerful motives to resist the extension of the republican principle.[16] He pointed out that much was conceded on the other side, and it was believed that for like reasons Texas would also overlook minor considerations. So spoke Donelson.

Jones now complained that the United States could have been more lenient, but that he would interpose no obstacle to the submission of the resolution to Congress and the people. Accordingly, on April 15, a proclamation was issued calling upon the Senators and Representatives to meet at Washington-on-the-Brazos June 16, 1845. It was fear on his part of the people rather than a zeal for annexation that caused Jones to do this. Annexation meetings sprang up everywhere, but there were no meetings held that opposed the plan.

The Senate and the House of Representatives of the Republic of Texas agreed to the following resolution:

> Be it resolved by the senate and house of representatives of the republic of Texas

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16 J. H. Smith, _op_. _cit_., 442.

> in Congress assembled, That the government of Texas doth consent that the people and territory of the republic of Texas may be erected into a new State, to be called the State of Texas, with a republican form of government, to be adopted by the people of said republic, by deputies in convention assembled, in order that the same may be admitted as one of the States of the American Union; and said consent is given on the terms, guarantees, and conditions set forth in the preamble to this joint resolution.[17]

Texas was admitted to the Union by a joint resolution of the Congress of the United States which read as follows:

> Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the State of Texas shall be one, and is hereby declared to be one, of the United States of America, and admitted into the Union on an equal footing with the original States in all respects whatever.
>
> And be it further resolved, That until the Representatives in Congress shall be apportioned according to an actual enumeration of the inhabitants of the United States, the State of Texas shall be entitled to choose two Representatives.
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> Approved, December 29, 1845.[18]

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17 B. P. Poore, _The Federal and State Constitutions, Colonial Charters, and Other Organic Laws of the United States_, Part II, 1765-66.

18 _Ibid._, 1783-84.

CHAPTER II

FAVORABLE REACTIONS TO THE ACQUISITION OF TEXAS

Major issues usually have arguments both for and against them. The annexation of Texas was no exception, and this Chapter will attempt to enumerate some of the favorable reactions to the movement.

Blood Ties

In a speech before the United States House of Representatives in 1845, Alexander H. Stephens of Georgia declared that the people of Texas were mostly emigrants from the United States, and that they were of the Americo-Anglo Saxon race. "Our sympathies are with them," he said, "and they are attached to our institutions and form of government, and, in their struggles for the establishment of the same, it is but natural that we should be disposed to extend them a helping hand, though our individual interest may not thereby be advanced."[1]

Outlet for United States Population

Mr. Stephens also favored the annexation of Texas

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1 From the speech of Alexander H. Stephens delivered on the floor of the National House of Representatives in 1845, and printed in part in David Potter and Thomas G. Manning, _Nationalism and Sectionalism in America, 1775-1877_, 92.

because he thought that it would afford an outlet for the accumulating population in the United States. It would open a new field for the pioneer, and since the American people liked to roam, it would be a place to acquire new lands, adventure, and enterprise. The people could carry with them their habits and customs without incurring the liability of expatriation, or forfeiting the rights and privileges of being American citizens.

Add Political Weight and Importance to the South

The Georgian Representative favored the annexation for another reason. This reason was the sectional or southern question. He reiterated once again that the addition of Texas would not promote the South's pecuniary interests, but that it would give them political weight and importance. Mr. Stephens confessed that his feelings of attachment were most ardent towards the section that he represented, and then he asked: "And is it not natural and excusable that they should be? The South is my home -- my fatherland. Her fate is my fate, and her destiny my destiny."[2] Mr. Stephens declared further that he wanted Texas, not to extend slavery, but to strengthen the southwestern section in the national councils. He stated that he was no defender of slavery in the abstract, and did not wish or hope to see

2 Ibid., 93.

slavery extended to other countries. If the annexation of Texas were for the sole purpose of extending slavery, he would have opposed it, for at that time slavery existed in Texas and would continue to exist there even after the annexation. His purpose in obtaining Texas was to balance the different sections of the country. The Representative further stated that if the people looked around they could see the East prospering by her economy, her industry, by her commerce, navigation, and mechanic arts. The West was booming with her millions of population, and now vied for the ascendency on the floor. Why shouldn't the South be advancing too? Were her limits never to be enlarged, and her influence and power never to be increased?

These and other questions the Representative from Georgia asked. Concluding his speech, Mr. Stephens added: "As one of her sons, I say no. Let her, too, enter the glorious rivalship; not with feelings of strife, jealousy, or envy -- such sentiments are not characteristic of her people -- but with aspirations prompted by the spirit of a laudable emulation and an honorable ambition."[3]

Settlement of a Larger Issue

Another reason Mr. Stephens favored the annexation of Texas was that he thought the question would decide a far

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3 Ibid.

greater issue -- whether or not the limits of the United States would ever be enlarged. He spoke of Mr. Collamer's speech in which the Vermont gentleman thought that the Roman empire fell of its own weight because it had acquired too vast an empire. He also thought that England was spreading too much to keep her empire together. To this Mr. Stephens declared that there was a wide difference between these cases. Rome extended her dominions by conquest making her newly acquired inhabitants slaves. England extended her dominion and power upon a different principle -- the principle of colonization. Her provinces were subject to her laws, but were deprived of the rights of representation. He said, "But with us a new system or scheme has commenced. It is the system of a confederation of States. Who shall undertake to say to what extent this system may not go? Who is prepared now to rise up and say: It shall go this far but no farther."[4]

Uniformity of Laws for the Cotton and Sugar Growing Interests

Mr. Stephens stated that the North and West, not the South, would benefit from the annexation of Texas in so far as the benefits of trade and commerce were concerned. He stated that the North would have an enlarged market for its manufactures, and would have a new competitor in the field of raw materials which she has to buy, and

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4 *Ibid.*, 92-3.

by which she would be enabled to get it cheaper. The Georgian Representative declared that the same was true with the West with its breadstuffs, while the South would have nothing to sell to the people of Texas, but would feel sorely her real competition in the production of cotton and sugar. "If I looked at these facts," Mr. Stephens continued, "I would certainly oppose the annexation of Texas because she would develop those staples more so if she joined the Union than if she remained independent."[5] He stated, however, that other factors influenced his judgment.

Mr. Stephens explained that he considered it important that the cotton and sugar growing interests of the continent, as far as possible, should be subject to the same laws. This he favored to prevent undue advantages in the markets of the world. If Texas should remain out of the Union, and a rivalship should spring up there to the staples of the South, he declared that our interests might be greatly injured by regulations with other countries, partial to theirs, and discriminating against ours. Mr. Stephens explained that this could not happen if the whole be made subject to the same laws and policy.

Access to the Navigation of the Mississippi for all People

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5 Ibid., 91.

The Georgian Representative explained further that a large section of Texas lay upon navigable waters flowing into the Mississippi, and would always seek a market through the outlet of that river. More than three hundred thousand dollars' worth of cotton, produced in Texas in 1843, was shipped from New Orleans. A duty was paid on this cotton as it entered the limits of the United States. Then it was entitled to the drawback upon final shipment. Mr. Stephens explained that this was all inconvenient and would increase as time went on. The history of the world reveals the necessity for the peace of a country that the navigation of waters should be free and equal to those who live upon their borders. To avoid difficulties like the ones the United States had when Spain controlled the mouth of the Mississippi, it was important that Texas be brought into the Union.[6]

Extension of Slavery

John C. Calhoun of South Carolina and other prominent men took a positive stand in favor of annexation. For some years abolition societies had sent petitions to Congress praying for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia without creating much excitement. The twenty-fourth Congress was also flooded with them, and now they were taken more seriously. In the Senate, Mr. Calhoun denounced them

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6 <u>Ibid.</u>, 92.

as incendiary documents, and moved that they not be received. In 1836, he introduced a bill whereby postmasters were authorized to seize and suppress all anti-slavery documents.

Mr. Calhoun delivered a speech in the United States Senate on February 6, 1837, in which he stated that slavery, instead of an evil, was a positive good. He stated as follows:

> I hold that in the present state of civilization, where two races of different origin, and distinguished by color, and other physical differences, as well as intellectual, are brought together, the relation now existing in the slaveholding States between the two, is, instead of an evil, a good -- a positive good.[7]

His argument is sometimes called the "Greek Democracy" argument. Calhoun declared that there has never existed a wealthy and civilized society in which one portion of the community did not live on the labor of the other.

Soon after Texas received her independence, Calhoun pronounced himself not only in favor of the immediate recognition of the independence of Texas, but of its annexation to the United States. However, he denied that his main object in advocating annexation was to secure additional slave territory. But this was the main object of his party, and it was nothing discreditable to the apostle of

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7 <u>Ibid.</u>, 176-77.

slavery, who deplored the lack of equilibrium between the free and slave States, that he should wish the addition of Texas to the slave side.[8]

Albert G. Brown, a Senator from Mississippi, stated in a speech to the Senate that there were three hundred and fifty thousand slaveholding aristocrats in the South. This was only one in one hundred of the entire population. Speaking to William H. Seward and also to the abolitionists, who could not see why the population as a whole supported slavery, Brown suggested that they have a social interest at stake that is worth more to them than all the wealth of all the Indies. The Senator stated that in his State there were about three hundred and fifty thousand whites, and about an equal number of blacks. What would be the immediate and necessary consequence if the Negroes were all set free? A struggle for the supremacy would ensue, and the wealthy would gather up their piles and move to some other section of the United States. This would leave the poor whites to suffer under the blacks who would outnumber the whites some four or five to one. Brown declared in the following words:

> If the white man, reduced to such a condition, were allowed to marry his sons to Negro wives, or his daughters to Negro husbands, he might bless his stars. If the Senator from New York expects the aid of non-slaveholders in the South in bringing

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8 Carl Schurz, Life of Henry Clay, II, 261.

about this state of social relations, let
me tell him he is greatly mistaken.[9]

The frame of mind of the Southern leaders is well set forth in the message of Governor McDuffie to the South Carolina legislature in 1835. He spoke of the attempts of certain societies and persons of the non-slaveholding States who had spread pamphlets and leaflets among them to excite the Negroes to insurrection and massacre. The Governor then added:

> The crime which these foreign incendiaries have committed against the peace of the State, is one of the very highest grade known to human laws. It not only strikes at the very existence of society, but seeks to accomplish the catastrophe, by the most horrible means, celebrating the obsequies of the State in a saturnial carnival of blood and murder, and while brutally violating all the charities of life, and desecrating the very altars of religion, impiously calling upon Heaven to sanction these abominations. It is my deliberate opinion, that the laws of every community should punish this species of interference by death without benefit of clergy, regarding the authors of it as enemies of the human race. Nothing could be more appropriate than for South Carolina to set this example in the present crisis, and I trust the Legislature will not adjourn till it discharges this high duty of patriotism.[10]

The <u>Mobile Advertiser</u> published the article below on the acquisition of Texas:

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9 David Potter and Thomas G. Manning, <u>Nationalism and Sectionalism in America, 1775-1877</u>, 177.

10 Albert B. Hart and Edward Channing, <u>American History Leaflets</u>, 2-3.

> The South wish to have Texas admitted into the Union for two reasons: First, to equalize the South with the North, and secondly, as a convenient and safe place calculated from its peculiarly good soil and salubrious climate for a slave population....The question is therefore put by the South to Congress and the country, Shall we have justice done us by the admission of Texas into the Union, whenever that admission may be asked by the Texans themselves? The North almost to a man will answer no. The West will be divided, and the discussion of the question will find two strong and powerful parties; the one in favor of Texas, a slave-holding province, and the other against it.[11]

The following quotation came from the Edgefield Carolinian, a newspaper said to be then under the control of the governor of South Carolina, McDuffie:

> The acquisition of Texas, relinquished by the government of the United States to the magnanimous Ferdinand VII by the Florida treaty of 1819, is now a subject of much interest in the western states. This valuable territory has now devolved on the republic of Mexico, and from the conditions of that country, suffering from invasion and civil war, and with scanty finances, it is supposed that the retrocession might be obtained for a reasonable equivalent. Great confidence is expressed that the administration will embrace the present favorable occasion of regaining an extensive and fertile region of country within the natural limits of the United States.[12]

In 1830, President Jackson offered Mexico five million dollars for Texas, but the offer was refused. Mr. Lundy states that Jackson was so sharpset for Texas that from the

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11 Quoted by B. Lundy, The War in Texas, 54.

12 Ibid., 24.

first year of his administration he set double engines to work, of negotiating to buy Texas with one hand, and instigating the people of that province to revolt against Mexico with the other. It was charged that Houston was Jackson's agent for the rebellion, and Anthony Butler, a Mississippi land-jobber in Texas, for the purchase.[13] However, R. S. Cotterill states that slave owners neither originated the revolt nor guided it. He further declares that neither his residence among the Cherokee nor his intimacy with Jackson qualified Sam Houston for heading a cause of the planter aristocracy.[14]

In speaking of slavery in connection with the Texas question, Thomas W. Gilmer admitted that the climate and soil of Texas was adapted to the culture of cotton and sugar crops which render slave-labor more profitable than it could be in grain-growing regions. He explained that this might induce the slave population now in the United States to advance southward in the event of annexation. Mr. Gilmer then declared,

> But as this population advances to the south, will it not recede from the north? Is it the object of your correspondents to confine the slave population of the United States within a compass so narrow as to multiply the hardships of the slave, and to compel the master to turn him loose upon the north and the west,

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13 Allan Nevins, The Diary of John Quincy Adams, 548.

14 R. S. Cotterill, The Old South, 202.

> nominally free, but really a burden to himself, and a scourge to the people of the free states. I ask the laboring man of the north, I ask the infatuated philanthropist of the north, if they have not already enough of the free Negro?.... I ask if there be not many yet living in northern states whose experience can testify that the relations between the negro and the white man were better even there, as master and slave, than now when there is an equality nominally recognized by law, against which every sentiment of nature and reason revolts?[15]

Mr. Gilmer then went on to suggest that it was high time both the North and South pause a moment and deliberate calmly on the dangers that surrounded them. He thought the true question was not now whether there could be more territory added to the Union, but whether the territory and the States in the Union could continue to be governed by a constitution which was universally believed, until recently, to have settled forever the relative rights and obligations of the States as to slavery.

Mr. Gilmer believed, from the passages written in the March 4 article of the National Intelligencer by thirteen Congressmen, that Adams and company contemplated the abolition of slavery in the United States by the agency of the federal government. In the following words, he added:

> Certainly these gentlemen cannot be ignorant of the fact that the federal constitution recognizes slavery as one of the objects entitled to its protection, and as one of the elements of the

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15 J. Hughes, Niles' National Register, LXIV, 284.

> government which it created. That provision is therein made for the surrender of fugitive slaves in all the states, and that three-fifths of the slaves of the Union are to be enumerated in apportioning representation, and may thus be subjected to direct taxation.16

Gilmer declared that it remains to be seen whether the gentlemen speak only for themselves, or for the millions of people whom they believe to have adopted the same fatal sentiments which they have uttered.

Mr. Gilmer concluded his attack in the following words:

> I will not believe that your correspondents have spoken advisedly, or by any authority, when they claim to reflect the feelings of the people of the free states. Though there are thirteen of those honorable gentlemen, (and that is a revolutionary number,) I am persuaded that they will find a more practical as well as a more liberal spirit pervading the population of the non-slaveholding states. The union is as necessary now as it always was for the protection of all. It can be preserved only by preserving the constitution which formed it, and the people of the United States will look with indignant reprobation upon any scheme for aggrandizing any one section of the country at the expense of another..........The compromises of the constitution can be carried out so as to admit many more new states into our Union, without impairing the force of that great example by which we have already done so much to emancipate the world. Our Union has no danger to apprehend from those who believe that its genius is expansive and progressive, but from those who think that the limits of the United States are already too large and the

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16 Ibid., 285.

principles of 1776 too oldfashioned for this fastidious age.[17]

Fear of England Acquiring Texas

Mr. Gilmer also explained that the prejudices which the thirteen Congressmen would excite are most unfavorable to the permanent harmony and best interests of the Union. He went on to discuss several reasons why Texas should be annexed. Among these reasons was cited the opinion that annexation was capable of harmonizing national discord, which some agitators, in conjunction with certain British agents at home and abroad, had long sought to inflame.

In speaking of the British attempt to meddle in Texas affairs, Gilmer declared:

> Is not Mr. Adams the last man who ought to desire the establishment of British power over the country between the Sabine and the Rio Grande? Does any man know better than he that this territory ought now of right to be part and parcel of the United States? Does any man know better why it is not? Let me remind him that posterity may be slow to ascribe to him any very patriotic motives in now attempting to invoke the prejudices of a particular section of the union against slavery, in order to prevent the acquisition of a territory now peopled by our countrymen, and which has been improperly lost to us.[18]

John C. Calhoun also became alarmed by reports that Texas might join some European power. If England should

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17 *Ibid.*

18 *Ibid.*, 282.

take Texas, for example, he thought that it would strike a heavy blow at slavery.

On October 23, 1843, Mr. Calhoun wrote a letter to Francis Wharton of Philadelphia in which he frankly expressed his views on annexation. He said that it was a question of life or death, and opposition to it at the North was due to the fact that the people there had not sufficiently weighed the consequences of England's policy and the obligation of all sections to defend the South. He declared that the South had stood by the North in the Revolution, in 1812, and in the question of the Maine boundary, but that now the North refused to reciprocate. He declared further:

> If we shall have the folly or wickedness to permit Great Britian to plant the lever of her power between the United States and Mexico, on the northern shore of the Gulf of Mexico, we give her a place to stand on, from which she can (brave?) at pleasure the American continent and control its destiny. There is not a vacant spot left on the globe, not excepting Cuba, to be seized by her, so well calculated to further the boundless schemes of her ambition and cupidity. If we should permit her to seize on it, we shall deserve the execration of posterity. Reject the treaty, and refuse to annex Texas, and she will certainly seize on it. A treaty of alliance commercial and political will be forthwith proposed by Texas to her, and I doubt not accepted.[19]

Andrew Jackson was also influential. Several of his letters were published in the Richmond Inquirer. He said

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19 Carl Schurz, Life of Henry Clay, II, 262.

that if Texas be not accepted now, she will necessarily go over to England. In April, 1844, he declared that men who would postpone the annexation because of party affiliation or other reasons ought to be publicly exposed and sent to their own native dunghills, there to rest forever.

Strength Added to the United States

John Tyler consistently justified annexation on grounds of broad national interest, as a measure designed to benefit all sections of the country, and a move to aid the commercial interests of the North.[20] In March, 1843, England's scheme to injure American slavery by freeing the Texan slaves became known to Tyler. In May, 1843, he became further alarmed when he learned through the New York Journal of Commerce that an abolition movement existed in Texas.

In transmitting the treaty to the Senate, Mr. Tyler tried to smooth the troubled waters that existed as a result of Calhoun's remarks about Texas being a sectional issue. He emphasized the benefits annexation would have on American settlers already in Texas, on the commercial interests of the North and East, on the Western States by creating a new market for their products, and on the South

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20 Ray Allen Billington, *Westward Expansion*, 502-03.

by giving it security and protection. President Tyler interpreted the outcome of the election of 1844 as a mandate from the people to acquire Texas, and this he did by a joint resolution of Congress.

CHAPTER III

UNFAVORABLE REACTIONS TO THE ACQUISITION OF TEXAS

Danger of Extending the Territory

John Quincy Adams on December 25, 1835, delivered a speech in the United States House of Representatives. Parts of that speech follow :

> As to the annexation of Texas to your Confederation, for what do you want it? Are you not large and unwieldly enough already? .... But, sir, suppose you should annex Texas to these United States; another year would not pass before you would have to engage in a war for the conquest of the Island of Cuba .... Cuba will stand in need of more efficient protection and above all the protection of a naval power. Suppose that naval power should be Great Britian. There is Cuba at your very door; and if you spread yourself along a naked coast, from the Sabine to the Rio Bravo, what will be your relative position towards Great Britian, with not only Jamaica, but Cuba, and Porto Rico in her hands, and abolition for the motto to her union cross of St. George and St. Andrew?[1]

Mr. Adams went on to declare that England would not look on while a democracy was gobbling up her neighbor. He declared further that England would carry emancipation and abolition with her in every fold of her flag.

No Necessity for Extending the Limits of the Union

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1 Quoted by B. Lundy, _The War in Texas_, 29.

One of Daniel Webster's reasons for not favoring the annexation of Texas to the United States was that he did not see why more territory should be added to the Union.

In a speech delivered on May 6, 1837, Mr. Webster stated that he wished the new republic of Texas success. In his own words he said:

> We all wish it success; and there is no one who will more heartily rejoice than I shall, to see an individual community, intelligent, industrious, and friendly toward us, springing up, and rising into happiness, distinction, and power, upon our own principles of liberty and government.[2]

On the question of annexation, Mr. Webster declared that he must set down his principles. This he did by explaining that he saw unsurmountable objections to the annexation of Texas to the United States. He spoke of the acquisition of Louisiana and Florida as being something different from the Texas situation. He added:

> The accession of Texas to our territory, is not necessary to the full and complete enjoyment of all which we already possess. Her case therefore stands entirely different from that of Louisiana and Florida. There being then no necessity for extending the limits of the union, in that direction, we ought, I think, for numerous and powerful reasons, to be content with our present boundaries.[3]

Opposition to Increasing the Inequality of Representation

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2 William O. Niles, *Niles' Weekly Register*, LII, 152.

3 *Ibid.*

Daniel Webster also denounced the acquisition of Texas by conquest. He declared that the course about to be adopted would turn the Constitution into a deformity and into a curse rather than a blessing. He argued further that it would make a frame of government founded on the grossest inequality and would imperil the very existence of the Union.[4]

The Pennsylvania Gazette had the following to say about the acquisition of Texas:

> The acquisition of Texas promises to be a leading measure of the present administration, and without doubt, one of great magnitude and importance. This will be very apparent from the fact as stated, that the territory in question will make nine States, as large as Kentucky; to which add the apalling consideration, that it is designed to make these nine States slave States. It is high time, for the Northern interests, the non-slave-holding States, to look around, to see how the balance of power will be affected by this bold undertaking.[5]

Opposition to the Increase of Slavery

In 1836, the anti-slavery movement began to show itself in the Senate. The contest came on the reception of petitions for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. Mr. Calhoun moved that these petitions should not be received, but this was defeated. The question

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4 Henry Cabot Lodge, Daniel Webster, 271.

5 Quoted by B. Lundy, op. cit., 29.

then came on the petitions themselves, and the plan of their supporters was rejected. Mr. Webster voted with the minority because he disapproved this method of disposing of the matter. He presented three similar petitions soon afterward and moved their reference to a committee of inquiry. He argued, that, while the government had no power whatever over slavery in the States, it had complete control over slavery in the District, which was a totally different affair.

Daniel Webster, in a speech on May 6, 1837, stated that Texas would in all likelihood become a slave State. However, he declared that he would do all in his power to keep slavery from expanding on this continent.

Also in 1837, a big public reception was given Mr. Webster in New York. In the course of his speech on that occasion, he referred to Texas and strongly expressed the belief that Texas should remain independent. He also touched on slavery by declaring:

> I frankly avow my entire unwillingness to do anything that shall extend the slavery of the African race on this continent, or add other slave-holding States to the Union. When I say that I regard slavery in itself as a great moral, social, and political evil, I only use the language which has been adopted by distinguished men, themselves citizens of slave-holding States. I shall do nothing, therefore, to favor or encourage its further extension. We have slavery already amongst us. The Constitution found it in the Union, it recognized it, and gave it solemn guaranties. To the full extent of the guaranties we are all bound in honor, in justice, and by the Constitution. ..... But when we come to speak of admitting new

> States, the subject assumes an entirely different aspect. In my opinion, the people of the United States will not consent to bring into the Union a new, vastly extensive, and slave-holding country, large enough for half a dozen or a dozen States. In my opinion, they ought not to consent to it.[6]

On September 20, 1837, John Quincy Adams presented twelve petitions and remonstrances against the admission of Texas into the Union. Other members presented many other petitions. Again on September 28, 1837, Adams presented petitions for the abolition of slavery in the Territories, for refusing the admission of any new slave-holding State into the Union, and for the prohibition of the inter-State slave-trade.

On February 14, 1838, Mr. Adams presented three hundred and fifty petitions to Congress. Of these, sixty-five were for the abolition of slavery and the slave-trade in the District of Columbia, and fifty-four were against the annexation of Texas to the Union. One petition prayed that Congress would take measures to protect citizens of the North going to the South from danger to their lives. Mr. Adams said that in another part of the Capitol it had been threatened that if a Northern abolitionist should go to North Carolina he would be hanged if he could be caught.

During 1838, more petitions came in, and Mr. Calhoun, always defending his beloved Southland by argument, now

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6 Henry Cabot Lodge, op. cit., 282-83.

attempted to stop the agitation in another way. He introduced a resolution to the effect that the petitions were a direct and dangerous attack on the institution of the slave-holding States. Mr. Webster wrote to a friend that Calhoun's resolution was an attempt to write a new constitution, and that the proceedings of the Senate, when they passed the resolution slightly modified, drew a line which could never be obliterated. The resolutions were adopted by a large majority, Mr. Webster voting against them. John Quincy Adams, who had no love for Mr. Webster, says in his diary in March, 1838:

> Their policy is dalliance with the South; and they care no more for the right of petition than is absolutely necessary to satisfy the feeling of their constituents. They are envious of my position as the supporter of the right of petition; and they truckle to the South to court their favor for Webster. He is now himself tampering with the South on the slavery and the Texas question.7

After leaving the cabinet in 1842, Mr. Webster continued to watch with attention the progress of events. The formation of the Liberty Party alarmed him, for he understood the force of the anti-slavery movement in the North. He now saw that force take definite shape and assume extreme grounds of opposition.

Henry Clay also had to take part in the progress of a

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7 Ibid., 285-86.

scheme which the slave powers pushed forward -- the scheme having in view the eventual annexation of Texas. His attitude toward Texas was curious indeed.

In 1820, it should be remembered that, as a member of the House of Representatives, Clay attacked bitterly the Monroe administration for having given up Texas in the Florida treaty. In 1827, as Secretary of State under John Q. Adams, he instructed Poinsett to propose to the Mexican government the purchase of Texas for a sum of money. Now Clay was at the head of the Committee on Foreign Relations in the Senate, and the subject presented itself to him in an entirely new aspect.

During all these years, Texas was building up a history. Slavery, too, was involved and Southerners seized upon the opportunity to extend their domain. Clay was in no haste to recognize Texas in 1836. Four weeks after Texas proclaimed her independence, he reported from the Committee on Foreign Relations a resolution "that the independence of Texas ought to be acknowledged by the United States whenever satisfactory information shall be received that it has in successful operation a civil government capable of performing the duties and fulfilling the obligations of an independent power."[8] He conceded, however, that it was not necessary to act upon his resolution at that session of

8 Carl Schurz, Life of Henry Clay, II, 92.

Congress.

Why was Clay so cold towards Texas now? Perhaps the very thing which made the acquisition of Texas so desirable to Calhoun secretly alarmed Clay. When another resolution was voted upon, declaring that the condition of things in Texas was now such as to entitle that country to recognition as an independent state, Clay's name did not appear among those voting.

Henry Clay, largely a Southern man with Northern principles, disliked annexation because his instinct told him that it meant the propagation of slavery, and that it endangered the Union. Both Clay and Van Buren agreed to publicly take position against it, if it should become necessary. However, as late as 1843, Clay hoped it would not be necessary. On December 8, 1843, he said, in a letter that he did not think it right to present new questions to the public and to allow President Tyler, for his own selfish purposes, to introduce an exciting topic, and add to the other subjects of contention before the country.

In view of the possible annexation of Texas and the extension of slave territory, the National Anti-Slavery Convention published a Declaration of Sentiments as cherished by them in relation to the enslavement of one-sixth of the American people. It reads in part as follows:

> We believe and affirm -- That every

> American citizen, who retains a human being in involuntary bondage, as his property, is (according to Scripture) a MAN-STEALER. That the slaves ought to instantly be set free, and brought under the protection of law. We maintain that no compensation should be given to the planters emancipating their slaves....We shall organize Anti-Slavery Societies, if possible, in every city, town and village in our land.[9]

An unidentified "gentleman of great philantropy" in the State of New York expressed himself this way:

> The number of respectable men in Texas is too small to redeem the country and their cause from the fathomless abyss of misery, degradation, and infamy, into which the projected establishment and perpetuation of slavery must inevitably plunge them as well as the United States. Meanwhile, all the slave-mongers, slave-politicians, and slave-presses, on this side of the Sabine and Red rivers, are using the utmost exertions to force the recognition of Texan Independence, and its incorporation with the United States as speedily as possible. This monstrous outrage, unsurpassed in the blackest pages of history, is fast tending to its consummation.[10]

John Quincy Adams described President Tyler as a political-sectarian, of the slave-driving, Virginian, Jeffersonian school, principled against all improvement, with all the interests and vices of slavery rooted in his moral and political constitution. "This day," he continued,

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9 David M. Potter and Thomas G. Manning, Nationalism and Sectionalism in America, 1775-1877, 194.

10 Quoted by B. Lundy, The War in Texas, 54.

"was in every sense gloomy."[11] Mr. Adams was speaking of the day that Tyler became President of the United States.

On April 2, 1844, the treaty of annexation of Texas to the Union was sent to the Senate. Adams declared that with it went the freedom of the human race. He declared that the treaty was Tyler's last card for a popular whirlwind to carry him through for the Presidential nomination.[12]

Constitutional Objections

The projected annexation of Texas stirred Mr. Adam's indignation. "It is," he said, "a question of a far deeper root than any other question that agitated the country."[13] He based his opposition to the annexation upon constitutional objections, and in September, 1837, offered a resolution that "the power of annexing the people of any independent state to this Union is a power not delegated by the Constitution of the United States to their Congress or to any department of that government, but reserved to the people." The Speaker of the House would not permit this statement to be read on grounds that it was not in order.

The Boston Atlas denounced the annexation of Texas

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11 Allan Nevins, The Diary of John Quincy Adams, 520.

12 Ibid., 569.

13 John T. Morse, John Quincy Adams, 266-67.

as "a mad project, irrational, preposterous, manifestly against the provisions of the Constitution, the contemptible scheme of a poor miserable traitor temporarily acting as President," and a scheme, too, "that was liable to end in ruin, bloodshed, the downfall of the American government and the overthrow of Republican principles."[14] The paper added that the project would be resisted with the last drop of blood.

No Advantages Derived

On March 3, 1843, thirteen members of the twenty-seventh Congress prepared a statement which was addressed "to the people of the free States of the Union." This article appeared in the National Intelligencer and was signed by these men: John Quincy Adams, S. M. Gates, J. R. Giddings, William Slade, William B. Calhoun, S. J. Andrews, N. B. Borden, Thomas C. Chittenden, John Mattocks, J. M. Howard, Christopher Morgan, Victory Birdseye, and Hiland Hall.[15]

The statement was an appeal to the people of the United States to stand against the annexation of Texas. The group declared that there was no political necessity for the annexation of Texas to the Union, and no advantages to be

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14 J. H. Smith, The Annexation of Texas, 183.

15 J. Hughes, Niles' National Register, LXIV, 173-75.

derived from it. They believed it to be for the interest and happiness of the whole Union to remain as it was, without diminution and without addition.[16]

Dissolution to be Final Result

The thirteen Congressmen believed that annexation would also result in the dissolution of the Union. The annexation was spoken of as a Southern attempt to gain more power. Concluding the attack, they said:

> To prevent the success of this nefarious project -- to preserve from such gross violation the constitution of our country, adopted expressly to secure the blessings of liberty and not the perpetuation of slavery -- and to prevent the speedy and violent dissolution of the Union, we invite you to unite, without distinction of party, in an immediate expression of your views on this subject, in such manner as you may deem best calculated to answer the end proposed.[17]

To the surprise of many, opposition to annexation was sometimes expressed in the South. John M. Botts, a Congressman from Virginia, did not favor the annexation of Texas. On April 12, 1844, he delivered a speech in New York which showed very definitely his attitude towards the annexation question.

During the course of his speech, Mr. Botts spoke of "a grave and more serious question." He declared that that

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16 Ibid.

17 Ibid., 175.

question strikes at the very root of the government and could not fail to stir up from its utmost depths the very foundations of society. The Virginian was speaking of the attempt to annex Texas to the United States. Mr. Botts concluded with the following words:

> If accomplished, that it will lead to the disturbance of our harmony, the distraction of our people, and, sooner or later, to the dismemberment of this government, I have no shadow of doubt; I am a Union man. I am no Southern man with Northern principles. I am a Southern man with national principles. Mr. Tyler has made up the issue for Congress whether we or England shall have Texas. For my own part, I do not choose that Mr. Tyler or his minister shall make up any such issue for me. Neither his opinion, nor the ends and aims of the disunionists, nor the cooperation of Texas land speculators, nor of the holders of Texas scrip or bonds, shall induce me to credit for an instant the absurd idea that England would be willing to take Texas, with her slave population, as a province, if it were offered to her tomorrow......But what are the terms of the treaty? Who yet knows? ... I am for this country, this country as it is, and this Union as it is, and I will never agree to dissolve it for the formation of any new one.[18]

Opposition to a War With Mexico

After Mr. Webster had retired from the Cabinet and engaged in law practice for several years, he was returned to the Senate. In a letter to his son, he wrote:

> While we feel as we ought about the annexation of Texas, we ought to keep in

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18 John M. Botts, The Great Rebellion, 83-4.

> view the true grounds of objection to that measure. These grounds are, -- want of constitutional power, -- danger of a war with Mexico, danger of too great an extent of territory, and danger of the increase of slave representation.[19]

When Congress assembled again in December, 1845, their attention was focused on the admission of Texas. Mr. Webster again stated his objections to the measure. He expressed his opposition to this method of obtaining new territory by resolution instead of by treaty, and as endangering the Constitution and the Union by increasing the already existing inequality of representation, and extending the area of slavery.

Van Buren, in a letter printed in the Washington Globe, declared that Mexico had said that the acquisition of Texas would be considered an unfriendly act. Thus, he believed that a war would result if the United States should annex Texas.

In his Raleigh letter, Henry Clay stated that he would not plunge the United States into a war for the acquisition of Texas. He considered the annexation of Texas without the consent of Mexico as a measure involving the country certainly in a war with Mexico, probably with other powers, and not called for by any general expression of public opinion.[20]

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19 Henry Cabot Lodge, op. cit., 289-90.

20 Carl Schurz, Life of Henry Clay, II, 244.

Both the South and the North were dissatisfied with the letter. The South clamored for Texas at any cost, and the North was dissatisfied because it did not put forward slavery as the main reason for repelling Texas.

On February 28, 1845, John Quincy Adams, speaking of the passage of the resolution annexing Texas to the United States, wrote in his diary:

> The day passes, and leaves scarcely a distinct trace upon the memory of anything, and precisely because, among numberless other objects of comparative insignificance, the heaviest calamity that ever befell myself and my country was this day consummated .... I took in this transaction no part save that of silent voting. I regard it as the apoplexy of the constitution.[21]

21 Allan Nevins, The Diary of John Quincy Adams, 574.

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